Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 11972 240035Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------007616 240042Z /66
O 231913Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5417

S E C R E T BOGOTA 11972

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FOR DEPY ASST SECY STEDMAN FROM THE AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 305667

1. SITUATION HERE REMAINS AS DESCRIBED IN BOGOTA 11907 AND WE DO NOT FORESEE IN THE NEAR FUTURE ANY ALARMING INCREASE IN TENSIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT LOPEZ ANF HIS MILITARY COMMANDERS. THE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND ATTITUDES WHICH PROMPTED THE MILITARY DECLARATION HAVE NOT DISAPPEARED, HOWEVER, AND WARRANT CONTINUED CLOSE OBSERVATION. WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A RESURGE IN MILITARY PRESSURES AGAINST LOPEZ PROMPTED BY SOME UNTOWARD FUTURE EVENT; AND I BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT IT WOULD BE PRUDENT FOR THE USG TO HELP GUARD AGAINST THAT CONTINGENCY.

2. I HAVE IN MIND THE POSSIBILITY OF A PERSONAL LETTER TO LOPEZ FROM PRESIDENT CARTER WHICH COULD STRENGTHEN LOPEZ'S POSITION IN ANY GRAVE CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY COMMANDERS AND WHICH COULD ALSO REDUCE THE CHANCES THAT LOPEZ MIGHT GIVE UP OFFICE IN A DESPAIRING OR DEPRESSED MOOD. SUCH A LETTER SHOULD NOT OF COURSE GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WASHINGTON IS ALARMED OR PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE SITUATION NOR IMPLY THAT WE ARE LESS THAN

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CONFIDENT OF LOPEZ' ABILITY TO HANDLE IT. IT WOULD, I BELIEVE, BE A GOOD IDEA TO COUCH IT IN TERMS OF A NEW YEAR MESSAGE, AND THE DRAFT TEXT GIVEN BELOW CONTAINS THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE LINE I WOULD RECOMMEND FOLLOWING IN THE LETTER.

BEGIN TEXT

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DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,
I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND TO YOU, YOUR COLLEAGUES IN GOVERNMENT, AND TO THE PEOPLE OF COLOMBIA MY PERSONAL BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR. I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED CLOSE COOPERATION WITH YOU AND I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING THAT HAVE CHARACTERIZED OUR NATIONS' RELATIONS FOR SO LONG WILL BE STRENGTHENED EVEN MORE IN THE YEAR AHEAD.
COLOMBIA AND THE UNITED STATES, LIKE ALMOST EVERY NATION OF THE WORLD, HAVE PASSED THROUGH A CHALLENGING AND TRYING YEAR. WE HAVE ALL HAD TO FACE MAJOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS WHOSE COMPLEXITY AND URGENCY CAN BE DAUNTING FOR THE GOVERNMENTS TASKED WITH SOLVING THEM. NONETHELESS, I BELIEVE THAT YOU AND I, AS LEADERS OF FREE LIBERAL SOCIETIES, HOLDING OUR OFFICES AS A RESULT OF DEMOCRATIC PRECESSES, FIND OURSELVES IN A SPECIAL SITUATION, DIFFERENT FROM THAT PREVAILING IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES. THE FREEDOMS WHICH CHARACTERIZE COLOMBIAN AND AMERICAN SOCIETIES ENCOURAGE THE UNINHIBITED EXPRESSION OF NOT ONLY ASPIRATIONS AND HOPES, BUT ALSO OF FRUSTRATIONS AND FEARS WHICH ARE USUALLY REPRESSED IN CLOSED, UNDEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE OUR DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES GIVE US INVALUABLE MEANS FOR RECOGNICIZIN AND RESPONDING TO SUCH PUBLIC SENTIMENTS IN A MANNER WHICH, WHILE SOMETIMES SLOW AND CUMBERSOME,
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IS MORE LIKELY TO LEAD TO PROFOUND, RATHER THE MERELY SUPERVICIAL, IMPROVEMENTS IN OUR SOCIETIES.
I KNOW YOU SHARE MY BELIEF THAT THE PROTECTION AND ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS AT THE CORE OF THIS DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND PROCESS. I ALSO KNOW, HOWEVER, HOW STRONG THE PRESSURES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS CAN BE UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS OF INSECURITY, OF DISRESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE AND PROPERTY, AND OF TERRORISM WHICH AFFLICT SO MANY NATIONS. ALLOW ME, THEREFORE, TO CONGRATULATE YOU PERSONALLY FOR THE COURAGE AND STEADFASTNESS YOU HAVE SHOWN IN MAINTAINING THE FINEST TRADITIONS OF COLOMBIAN DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONALITY IN THE FACE OF SUCH CHALLENGES.
THE YEAR AHEAD WILL, I AM CERTAIN, BRING FURTHER TESTS FOR OUR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES AND INSTITUTIONS. I REMAIN OPTIMISTIC THAT WE WILL PASS THESE TESTS SUCCESSFULLY AND I ASSURE YOU OF MY CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION IN THIS COMMON TASK.

END TEXT
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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ISecure: 1
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Subject: TENSIONS BETWEEN LOPEZ AND HIS MILITARY GOVERNMENT
TAGS: PGOV, MPOL, PINT, SHUM, CO, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/46730efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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